

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Department of Social Services	(2) MEETING DATE 1/14/2014	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Tracy Schiro, 781-1840 Linda Belch, 781-1902	
(4) SUBJECT Request to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Social Services outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Resource Family Approval program in San Luis Obispo County effective November 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board approve, and direct the Chairperson to sign, a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program for San Luis Obispo County effective November 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) n/a	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT n/a	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT n/a	(9) BUDGETED? n/a
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ____) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. ____)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) n/a		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: n/a <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5 Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP n/a	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Date: _____	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Emily Jackson			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts -			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Tracy Schiro, 781-1840
Linda Belch, 781-1902

DATE: 1/14/2014

SUBJECT: Request to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Social Services outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Resource Family Approval program in San Luis Obispo County effective November 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve, and direct the Chairperson to sign, a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program for San Luis Obispo County effective November 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017.

DISCUSSION

The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services (DSS) is responsible for licensing foster homes and approving adoptions. During the approval process, relative caretakers, foster parents, and adoptive parents must meet certain health and safety requirements before they can care for foster children or adopt children out of foster care. Historically, the process has been a two-step process, one to become a foster parent and then a more in-depth process (with duplication) to become an adoptive parent. This two-step process sometimes resulted delays-- slowing down the adoption process; leaving children in limbo. To address adoption delays due to differences in the approval process, and to ensure equity among applicants, Assembly Bill (AB) 340 was passed in 2007 and created the framework for the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program. However, implementation of the bill was delayed due to budget and hiring constraints and the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program was later authorized in 2012 through Senate Bill 1013 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012).

The purpose of the RFA program is to implement a unified, equitable, family-friendly, and child-centered resource family approval process to replace the existing structure which has various approval process criteria. A resource family can be defined as an individual or couple the County determines to have successfully met both the home approval standards and the permanency assessment criteria. Once the approval process is complete, a resource family is considered eligible to provide foster care for related and unrelated children in out-of-home placement, and is approved for adoption or legal guardianship, without any additional approval or licensure requirements. Before the RFA program this was not the case.

Prior to implementing the RFA program, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) established standards for the home approval and permanency assessment process for placing children in a resource family. When creating the standards CDSS worked with county welfare agencies, foster parent associations and other relevant community partners to create standards to adhere to when completing the home approval process and licensing foster care providers. Specific to the RFA program, each person filing an application to provide care for a foster child/youth shall be fingerprinted, have their criminal record reviewed, and have a home inspection that ensures the safety of the child(ren).

These standards are now the same regardless of whether the placement is with a relative caretaker, a foster parent, or an adoptive parent.

Senate Bill 1013 requires that all counties implement RFA by January 1, 2017. Early implementer counties include: Kings, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara and San Luis Obispo. San Luis Obispo County was asked by the State to take the lead in this early implementation and we agreed so that we could be an active part of the process development, utilizing our best practice model as the guide. The RFA program in San Luis Obispo County is effective November 1, 2013, with the other four (4) early implementer counties implementing by February 2014. All other counties are projected to implement the new RFA program by January 1, 2017.

The attached agreement (Attachment A) is standard for this program and is entered into between DSS, an early implementer county, and the State (i.e., CDSS) to fulfill the provisions of the RFA program. The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of both the County and CDSS, with respect to implementation of the RFA.

These services support the Department and County goal of providing high quality "results orientated" services that are responsive to community desires by setting standards that ensure the safety of all children/youth in foster care. The agreement is effective November 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017. For more information on the RFA program you can visit the CDSS web page: www.cdsscounties.ca.gov/rfa/ or the San Luis Obispo County DSS web page: www.slocounty.ca.gov/dss/Child_Welfare_Services/RFA.htm.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT

This agreement was created by CDSS in consultation with county welfare agencies, probation departments, foster parent associations and other interested community partners. Locally, the Department of Social Services, Probation, Foster Parent Associations, and community partners worked together to develop the Implementation Plan and will continue to meet to discuss process improvement.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pursuant to Welfare and Institution Code (WIC) §16519.5, the implementation of the RFA pilot program shall be contingent upon the continued availability of federal Social Security Act Title IV-E (42 U.S.C. §670) funds for costs associated with placement of children with resource families assessed and approved under the program. At this time, it is unknown what the fiscal impact of RFA implementation will be. There will be a balance of savings due to a reduction in duplicative efforts, though the amount of savings is unknown at this time.

RESULTS

By entering into this agreement, San Luis Obispo County will be in compliance with the CDSS RFA program intended to standardize and streamline the process for licensing foster family homes and approving relatives and non-relative extended family members as foster care providers.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment A- MOU Resource Family Approval Program Terms and Conditions
2. Attachment B- Clerk's File